

## Bocking Churchstreet

(SEE MAIN MAP)



Essex County Council  
Planning



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*Stewart Craig's*

WALK AROUND



## BOCKING CHURCHSTREET

*A short, circular walk of about  
two miles which takes in pasture,  
hedgerows, arable farmland, a  
farmyard and parts of the village  
of Bocking Churchstreet. The  
walk is varied and easy going,  
though not suitable for  
pushchairs or wheelchairs.*

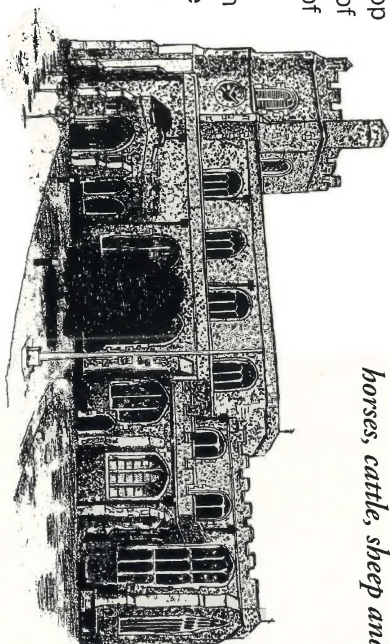
This guide has been produced with the assistance of  
"Ways Through Essex" at Essex County Council  
and Braintree District Council



## 1 *The Deanery Church of St. Mary*

The church was originally founded at the beginning of the 11th century though the present building dates mostly from around the 14th and 15th centuries. Owing to a quirk of history, Bocking parish comes under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Rector of Bocking bears the title "Dean of the Peculiar".

Note especially the ironwork on the porch doorway (1260); the unusual embattled churchyard wall with two arquebus rests; the oak roof with carved bosses; the brasses (including one to John Doreward, twice speaker of the House of Commons); and some good stained glass.

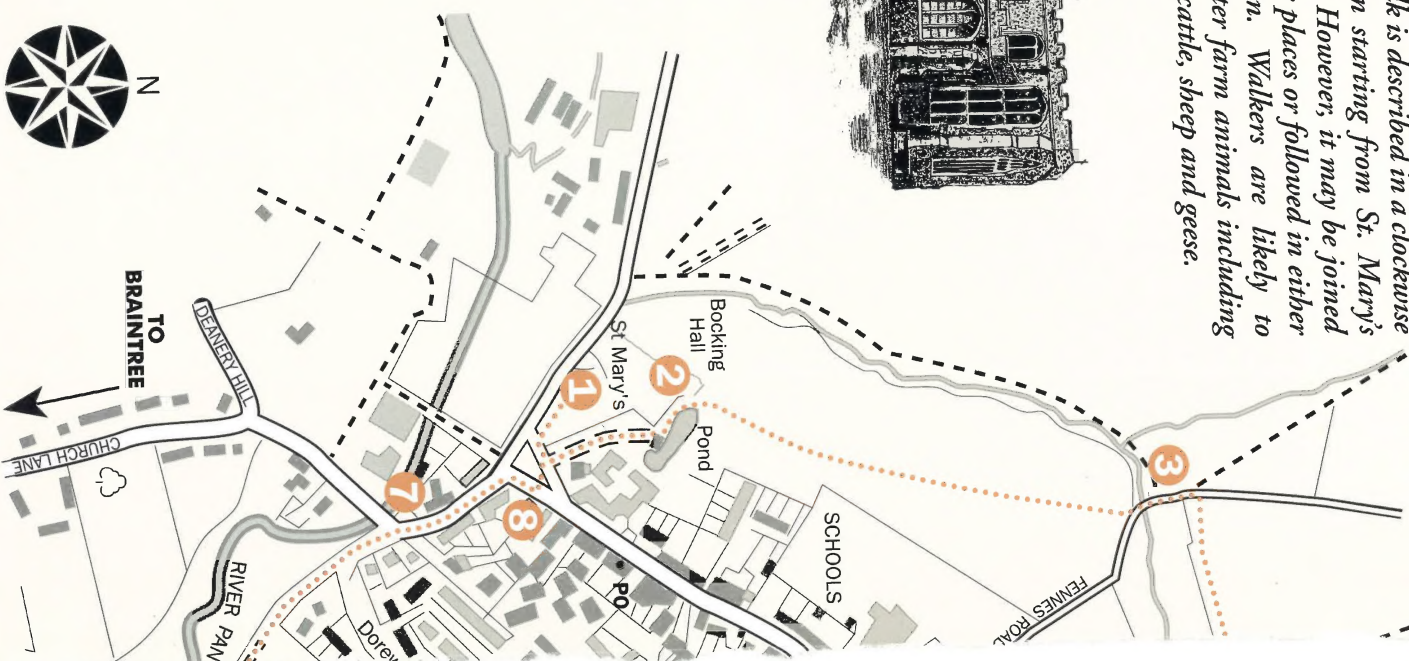


*The walk is described in a clockwise direction starting from St. Mary's church. However, it may be joined at other places or followed in either direction. Walkers are likely to encounter farm animals including horses, cattle, sheep and geese.*

Churchyards are one of the few remaining places to find ancient grassland (undisturbed for centuries). This is a good place to look for rare wild flowers. As you leave the churchyard you return to the village green with its three large beech trees. Turn to your left and immediately enter the main gates to Bocking Hall. The public right of way passes directly up the driveway.

## 2 *Bocking Hall*

A pair of unusual four horned Jacob sheep are often grazing beside the driveway as you approach the house. Bocking Hall was built during the 16th century (probably on the site of the original Saxon manor house) and was added to during the 17th century. Follow the path through the duck pond fence, around the duck pond and over the stile to the field beyond. Follow the path across the field keeping to the left of the fence. Pheasant or partridges may be seen in the fields here.





### 3 Fennes Road

Turn left and walk along the road for about 50 yards, just past the field gate take the public footpath on the right that rises up and passes along the far side of the hedge.

Before long the path cuts through the trees, over a stile and into pasture beyond. Go left, keeping the river on your right hand side. Walk all the way to the end.

Cross the stile at the end of the pasture.



*Beech leaf*

### 4 Polly's Lane

Rising left, is a typical, traditional green lane which probably dates from the 17th century. We go another way.

Turn to the right, cross the small bridge over the river and go up through the paddock and stable yard entrance to Church Street (opposite No. 294). Turn right.

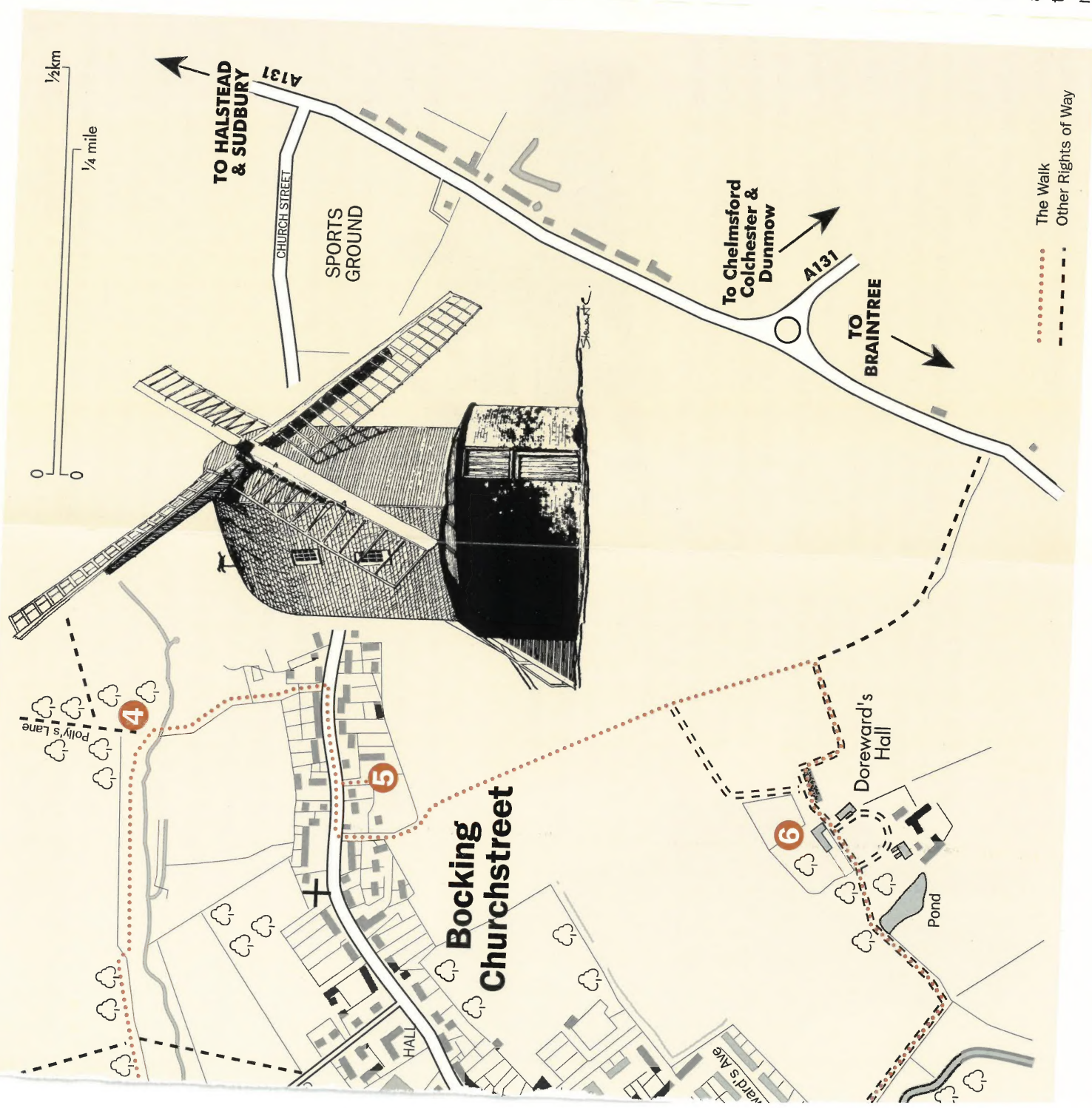
Take care crossing the road and turn up the small lane on the left just before "Rose Cottage" (No. 270). Access to the mill green is permitted.

### 5 Bocking Windmill

A fine post mill with a two storey brick roundhouse, recently restored and a rare example containing much original equipment. It is believed to date from around 1721, though it was moved to this site, from further down the hill in 1829-30.

Last working in 1912 it has since been restored several times, most recently in 1993-4, when extensive work was carried out on the interior and its equipment.

The mill is currently owned and maintained by Braintree District Council. A local voluntary society "Friends of Bocking Windmill" run a programme of regular open days and guided tours for groups raising substantial contributions towards the restoration and upkeep. Visitors to the mill are encouraged to make a donation.



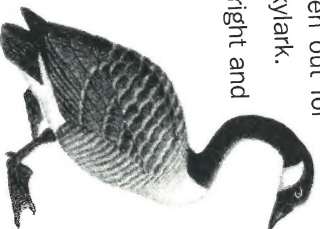


After leaving the mill, walk back down to Church Street and turn left. After about 60 yards turn left again down the signposted public footpath. Keep left as you emerge into open arable farmland. Follow the right of way along the row of wooden power line poles. Listen out for the melodious 'treeke' song of the skylark.

After about 500 yards, take the path right and walk down the hill to Doreward's Hall.

## 6 Doreward's Hall

These are the remaining parts of a much larger early Elizabethan house

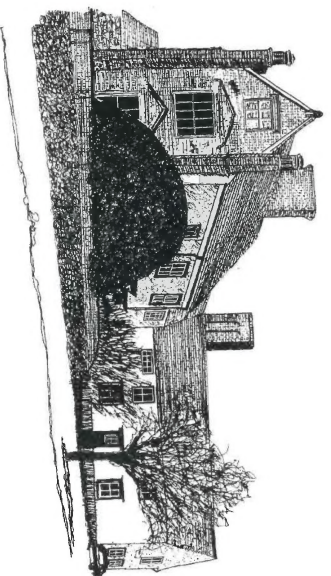


built for Edmund Thursby in 1579, the last Doreward descendant to live on the estate. Most notable: the end brickwork (The date of 1572 is said not to be original); the Elizabethan garden walls; the nearby Elizabethan thatched barn, (now a farm shop, selling goats milk ice cream); across the open farmyard stands a larger Essex barn dating from around 1450.

Walkers are generally welcome providing the privacy of the house occupants is respected.

As well as the fierce geese and many usual farmyard favourites look out for two Vietnamese 'pot bellied' pigs named 'Pickles' and 'Chutney'. Head out on the road past the duck pond. This attracts a fair number of wild visitors including Canada geese and shellduck.

The farm road passes a line of Horse Chestnut trees and then bends right. The pasture on the left is ancient water meadow. Now very rare in Essex, this land is enriched by silt left from winter flooding of the River Pant.



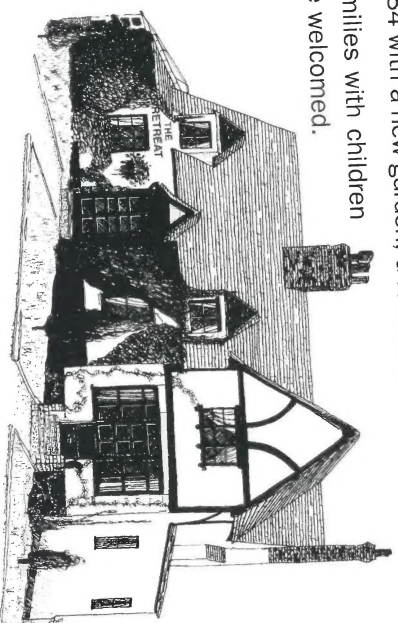
## 7 Kings' Bridge

Except to read the plaque on the bridge stay on this side of the river. Walking toward St. Mary's you are now on a busy road again. You pass John Doreward's Cottages on the left (see the inscription on the end) and the old blacksmith's opposite. Keeping to the right, the walk ends at The Retreat.

## 8 The Retreat

Dates from 1634 with some later additions. Formerly known as 'The Black Boy' the pub was re-named and re-opened in 1984 with a new garden, a restaurant and accommodation.

Families with children are welcomed.



**Parking:** Available near the church gates (note the old sign on the green) and up the hill a little on Church Street.

**Footwear:** Paths can be muddy at any time of year; sturdy waterproof shoes or boots are generally recommended.

**Maps:** This leaflet can be used together with O.S. 1:25,000 Pathfinder 1075 Sheet (TL 62/72)

**Public Transport:** Bocking is well served by buses from Braintree (2 miles). There is also an hourly service from Halstead (5 miles) and Chelmsford (13 miles). Braintree is served by regular trains from London (Liverpool Street Stn. 65 mins via Witham).

### Travel information

Buses: 0345 000333

Trains: 0206 564777 or 071 928 5100

## Remember the Country Code

*Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work*

*Guard against all risk of fire*

*Fasten all gates*

*Keep your dogs under close control*

*Keep to public paths across farmland*

*Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls*

*Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone*

*Take your litter home*

*Help to keep all water clean*

*Protect wildlife, plants and trees*

*Take special care on roads*

*Make no unnecessary noise*

### Acknowledgments:

Thanks to: Katie Haines and John Fretwell at "Ways Through Essex", Essex County Planning Dept.; Essex County Records Office; Marc Davies and John Byrne at Braintree District Council; Susan Lord of Doreward's Hall; David Locke of The Retreat; Christine Burden and the Friends of Bocking Windmill; Jerry Ison of Essex Wildlife Trust. Ian Jackson; Julia Szoka.

